

THE CHRONICLE

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THE CONGRESSIONAL NEW YEAR.

With the New Year practically commencing the business of the present Congress. The extra session of last fall and the portion of the present session which elapsed before Christmas were mainly occupied with preliminary and preparatory measures in which nothing has yet been decided, but during the discussion of which it has been determined where men stand, what are the questions to be determined and who is on this side, who on that. In truth, some such preliminary skirmishing as we have had the last two months was needful to clear up several mysteries which were perplexing men's minds and without which it was impossible to tell what any individual or party was likely to do. The President had taken two very weighty matters, the removal of troops from the Southern States and the mode of making the civil service appointments. How were these to be received by the two great parties in the Nation? And especially would the new policy cause a division in either, or in neither, or in both. Much speculation was also indulged in as to the amount of support and opposition which the two great financial and monetary measures of the Democratic party would meet. And all the questions our minds are clearer than they were last November, so that we can now form a definite conception what we have to deal with. Aided then by the light which proceedings in Congress have thrown upon them let us discuss each of the topics which we have above indicated and try to estimate how far our conceptions of them have been cleared up.

THE SOUTHERN QUESTION.

To a man reading some of the denunciations hurled at President Hayes by the Conkling-Blaine connection it would appear that the withdrawal of troops from New Orleans, Columbia and Charleston was the substantial gravamen of the offense given by his exaltation to the office of President. They are guilty of the vilest hypocrisy when they thus declaim, and it is a cheering sign of the waning power of the Republican party that they are driven to sneaking hypocrisy in the place of that brazen, defiant audacity with which their villainies were avowed in former days. The withdrawal of military support from the Packard and Nicholls governments was a foregone conclusion before Mr. Hayes was President at all, before he had changed his tune from the cant of the bloody shirt to the milder cant of Constitutional scruples. It was only due to the Gen. Grant's order on the part of the Secretary of War which prevented that step from being accomplished before the inauguration of Mr. Hayes. What he and his accomplices did about it was simply to intrigue for delay in order that a bargain might be made before it was done. Indemnity for some of the base criminals who did the counting in and a quiet acquiescence in the work of the Electoral Commission could not have been purchased by that transaction unless it was delayed till Mr. Hayes could have the manipulation of the business. And the men of those who control the strategy of the Republican party were at that time consenting to the trade. No! the whole Republican party except the carpet-baggers recognized the fact that the military support to carpet-baggers was played out, and those who are now howling against it would not, if Mr. Hayes' resistance were out of the way, dream of such a quixotic scheme as reinstating it. That is all a dead issue, let us turn to something still alive.

CIVIL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS.

There indeed the shoe does pinch. For many years now the Senate has been making advances towards wresting the appointing power from the President, and all the changes which have been gradually and imperceptibly made in this department of politics have tended in this direction. Resistance to this tendency would have been in consonance with our views, for we have long thought that the Senate was acquiring too much power, but such resistance required a very bold President and one very strong in his political position. Mr. Hayes may have been the one, he certainly was not the other; he was the President of a waning party, did not possess the confidence even of that, and the inherent vice in his title rendered him the last man to attempt a position from which Andrew Johnson had to come off defeated. Still he might have tried to solid Democratic votes, and enough Republican votes in the Senate to confirm his appointments, but this combination required that he should be sincere in his professions of Civil Service reform, while unfortunately almost every appointment he made gave the lie to them. His professed principle was that the distribution of patronage was not to be made the means of enlisting and rewarding partizan adherents. The principle was violated in almost every appointment that was made. The first came in the Postmaster-General and the Assistant Postmaster-General, the first to bribe old line Whigs and hungry Democrats in the South, and the second to feed the proteges of his patron Morton, in the North. Then came the shameless pampering of the members of the two returning boards who were satisfied with the richest offices in the States which they had fraudulently deprived of their electoral votes. Then came the reforming President. Then came the Pennsylvania intrigue by which the English mission was to be the purchasing consideration for the support of exasperated Pennsylvania politicians, though the appointment ultimately made exasperated them

worse than ever. Next the appointment of Sanborn to the Belgian ministry, a man twice rejected by his own party for official malfeasance which smelt too strong even for Radical offices. Even the New York appointments savored more of a struggle for political influence between Messrs. Evans and Conkling than of the true and earnest spirit of reform. Such appointments could be pushed through under the excitement of eager partizanship, but men's expectations were unreasonable when it was demanded that partizan adhesions should be set aside in their behalf for the sake of reforms which were a palpable imposture.

There was still another obstacle to the hearty support of the Democratic party as a party in behalf of these appointments. Mr. Hayes almost as soon as he was President avowed the purpose of making a special appeal to old line Whigs for support in his new policy, and both his distribution of patronage and the blandishments of his Southern tour were to be the form in which this appeal was to be made. He foolishly thought that a few soft words and half a dozen appointments in a State were going to break up that united opposition to the iniquities of the Republican party which had consolidated the conservative elements of the South in a compact organization for twelve years. He probably hoped that, even if he should fail to draw off any considerable number of partizans from the present organization, the very knowledge that an intrigue of the kind was going on would be likely to sow suspicion between those whose antecedents before the war had connected them with one or other of the old parties. A little reflection would have shown him that such an avowed intrigue was more likely to deter men from his support than to conciliate their adhesion. Those who had been Democrats of old could hardly be expected to favor a policy which was to leave them out in the cold, and old line Whigs would be cautious to avoid any course which would bring them into suspicion with their present comrades and allies. And such seems to have been the result unless it be true that he has really captured three Southern men. Messrs. Gordon and Hill, of Georgia, and Lamar, of Mississippi, are represented in the gossip of Washington as a great deal in the President's confidence, as frequent visitors to his private apartments and as favored participators in his social arrangements; which means, we presume, that they are sometimes invited to dinner with Republicans and old line Democrats are left out. We have never thought it worth while to inquire into the truth of this title tattle; for these gentlemen have really bound themselves to any course separate from the Democratic party in general, they have their own constituents to settle it with and it will hardly increase their influence at home. But it is chiefly among Republicans that we have found it discussed and that with considerable irritation, who think that these executive favors ought to be shown to themselves rather than to Southern rebels. Among Democrats the strongest emotion we have detected in the matter is one of quiet scorn. All these little intrigues vanish before the palpable fact that the Republican party is, with or without the president, as compact and solid an organization, as ever recognizing no distinction whatever between old line Whigs and Democrats, and the Democracy is far too clear sighted to allow of any divisions with this solid organization in front of it.

THE REAL BUSINESS OF CONGRESS.

The real business of Congress dwarfs all these considerations to complete insignificance. This is the renovation of the monetary, financial and commercial interests of the country, now in such an appalling state of prostration, and in reference to these matters we do not doubt but that there will be a redistribution of parties, not as the President so stupidly imagined on the old lines of Whig and Democrat, but on new and living issues. These are at present the repeal of the resumption law, the remonetization of silver and in the future legislation on the tariff, the national banks and the shipping laws. We were surprised lately at hearing a very intelligent politician speak of these as not being party questions. We are decidedly of the opinion that they will soon be the only party questions. The paltry squabbles between Evans and Conkling about appointments, the dispute about seats in the Senate, these matters are too personal, too ephemeral in their interest, to affect the future of parties; the others are matters profoundly affecting the interests of the whole nation and at the same time cutting deep into the profits of privileged classes and thus rendering certain a struggle as for life and death between the people as a whole and the powerful combinations of men interested in maintaining the present state of things. This is a contest necessitated by the very nature of things. It is true that the vote on these questions so far as they coincide with previously existing party lines, and we deem it exceedingly probable that this divergence will be permanent; very few Eastern Democrats voted for remonetization, very few Western or Southern Republicans voted against it, though of the three Southern President's friends two at least anticipated the Presidents recent message by voting with the Eastern Republicans. But all this only shows that party lines are going to be still sectional, but not coincident with the old existing parties of Mason and Dixon's line. These are to be the leading topics of controversy in the present Congress and as men shall divide on these so will run the party lines of the future.

CONKLING'S NEW TACTICS.

The political atmosphere is rife with rumors of a new attack on the President organized by the malcontent Radicals with B. O. Butler and Roscoe Conkling at their head. The scheme is nothing short of a conspiracy to be appointed by a commission to the Senate to enquire into alleged fraudulent transactions in counting the vote at the late Presidential election with a view to displacing Hayes and Wheeler and substituting Tilden and Hendricks in their places. We know nothing about the truth of these rumors but conjecture that nothing further is really contemplated than to bring out some exposures damaging to Mr. Hayes' character as a reforming President. Nothing has occurred in the recent history of parties so signally demonstrating the desperation to which the extreme Radical party has been reduced as this new move. Mr. Conkling himself probably more than any other man was privy to the rascality of the late election, and eager to cover them up with the *alibi* device of the Electoral Commission. We are reminded of the terrible stories told of starving mariners at sea who in their desperation have taken to slaying and devouring one another. It would be an index to our degradation if any Democrat to take part in such a scheme. Nothing is so favorable to the ultimate triumph of the party as the present state of things exactly as it stands, and to all overtures for concerted action with the Radical malcontents the reply should be:

Non tolli auxilium ne defensoribus istis.

TWO HALVES LESS THAN THE WHOLE.

As soon as the standard silver dollar is restored to its rightful monetary position, Congress has an important duty to perform in order to remedy the financial legislation of the demoralizing period. At that time a trade dollar was invented containing largely more silver than the standard, which is 412 grains, and a fractional currency of halves, quarters, dimes and half-dimes, containing considerably less than the standard. We are thus in the absurd position of having a coinage in which two half-dollars fall far short of making a dollar. One decidedly inconvenient result of this blunder is that the one and two-dollar greenbacks are at present valued at less than their face value. If the next Legislature fails to do so, it will incur a fearful responsibility. We must not permit the credit of the Government to be permanently tarnished forever, it will inflict a blow upon our material interests from which we can never recover. It will look like a step, a step to a stop to all improvement, drive away all immigration and prevent that influx of capital so necessary to our success in our property. These are the evils of destroyed credit and ruined character. It is not the effect upon the bondholders, but the effect upon the bondholders, even the widows and orphans who invested their money in our State bonds, who are to be considered. If the next Legislature fails to do so, it will incur a fearful responsibility. We must not permit the credit of the Government to be permanently tarnished forever, it will inflict a blow upon our material interests from which we can never recover. It will look like a step, a step to a stop to all improvement, drive away all immigration and prevent that influx of capital so necessary to our success in our property. These are the evils of destroyed credit and ruined character. 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